

## **Bingo, Raffles and Public Schools**

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The Gambling Control Division recently received a letter from a County Superintendent of Schools concerning playing bingo as a fundraiser. This provides an opportunity to remind everyone that under the Montana Constitution, all gambling must be authorized by the legislature. As a result there are laws regulating the conduct of bingo and raffles.

If players have to pay to play bingo, it is a form of gambling that requires a license or permit from the State. Generally, the only places bingo can be played for money is a casino, bar or senior citizens center.

If the bingo is for entertainment and no money is paid to play, the game is considered a promotional game and can be conducted without a permit or a license. If a group wants to have a one time fundraiser, they can apply for a "Casino Night" permit from the Gambling Control Division. This permit allows the sponsor to conduct an event including raffles, bingo, live keno and card games (not card tournaments) for prizes. Application forms and more information on Casino nights can be found at: <http://doj.mt.gov/gaming/forms/11.pdf> .

The split the pot (50-50) drawings are a form of raffle and are subject to state law. Raffles are regulated by counties and most nonprofit school related groups are exempt from many of the requirements. While County requirements vary around the state, everyone is required to submit an accounting for a raffle within 30 days after the drawing. The statute on raffles can be found at <http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/mca/23/5/23-5-413.htm> .